



# United States Department of the Interior



## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

California State Office  
2800 Cottage Way, Suite W1834  
Sacramento, CA 95825  
[www.ca.blm.gov](http://www.ca.blm.gov)

September 5, 2006

*In Reply Refer To:*

1781 (P)  
(CA912)

EMS TRANSMISSION: 9/5/06

Instruction Memorandum No. **CA-2006-032**

Expires: 9/30/2007

To: California Deputy State Directors and Field Managers

From: State Director

Subject: BLM-California Policy on Congressional Relations

As State Director in California, I fully recognize the critical importance of good Congressional relations. Over the last five years, I have also come to appreciate the positive working relationship BLM-California has with the California delegation. This accomplishment has been a team effort involving each and every one of you, along with your staffs, and I would like to thank you for your efforts.

To help build on that positive working relationship, I would like to review and reinforce both our State and the Washington Office policies regarding Congressional Relations. The newly issued (IM-2006-179, June 12, 2006) policy from the Director (attached) outlines State Directors' responsibilities regarding providing information, preparing legislation, commenting on legislation, preparing for hearings and testimony, meeting with members and staff, preparing responses to Congressional inquiries, and complying with procedures regarding lobbying restrictions. I encourage you to review that policy with your staffs and if you have any questions, or with clarification of any item, please feel free to discuss them with me or the External Affairs staff here at the State office. Any issue you believe should be shared with the Washington Office as specified in that memorandum should be forwarded to me or State Office External Affairs for transmittal/coordination with the Washington Office. We work very closely with the Congressional Affairs staff in Washington and will make sure your efforts are appropriately coordinated and reported.

I would also like to review and clarify BLM-California specific policies regarding Congressional Relations that have been in place for some years.

- I consider Congressional relations to be an important aspect of each Field Manager's job and I encourage you to develop positive working relationships with field staffs of our members throughout the State.
- You are encouraged to respond directly to inquiries sent/directed specifically to your office from Congressional members and staffs, either verbally or in writing, regarding matters within your local jurisdiction. I also encourage you to involve/consult with your Field Public

Affairs Officer in these responses. Please ensure that a copy of any written response signed by a Field Manager (along with the member's incoming letter) is sent to External Affairs at the State Office so that we are informed about local issues generating Congressional interest.

- If the matter involves current legislation, it is incumbent upon you to coordinate with the State Office External Affairs staff. The State Office External Affairs staff will work with you to ensure your Field Office appropriately responds to issues regarding legislation in coordination with the State and Washington office.
- If the matter in question is outside your local jurisdiction or involves a state or national policy/program, please consult with the State External Affairs Office. External Affairs will work with you to coordinate our response to matter in cooperation with the appropriate Field, State, or Washington Office.
- In terms of verbal/personal contacts with field staff, if the matter is expected to be controversial or might involve the member's state or Washington staffs, an e-mail or phone call notification from you or your Field Public Affairs Officer should be sent to External Affairs for appropriate dissemination/coordination with State Office or Washington Office staffs. Likewise, the External Affairs staff will work hard to keep you updated of State and Washington level Congressional contacts.
- Written Congressional inquiries addressed to the State Director (or forwarded from the Washington Office) are controlled by the State Director's staff and sent to the appropriate Field Manager (with a copy to the Field Public Affairs Officer involved) for preparation of a draft response. The State Director's staff will then prepare the draft for signature by the State Director or will send it on to Washington for signature by the appropriate official. Timeliness is important on all Congressional responses and your personal adherence to the due dates specified is appreciated.

These guidelines are intended to further enhance BLM-California's good working relationship with the 55 members of Congress. Further, the same good relationships and general rules of practice for Congressional relations here in California can be applied to all your positive efforts in working with state officials, state legislators, county supervisors, and other elected officials throughout the state. I am proud of all your hard work in this area.

Signed by:  
James Wesley Abbott  
Associate State Director

Authenticated by:  
Richard A. Erickson  
Records Management

Attachment:

Instruction Memorandum No. 2006-180, Congressional Relations, June 27, 2006 – (3 pgs)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

June 27, 2006

In Reply Refer To:  
1750 (WO620) P

EMS TRANSMISSION 06/30/2006  
Instruction Memorandum No. 2006-180  
Expires: 09/30/2007

To: State and Center Directors, WO Assistant Directors, and Division Chiefs  
From: Director  
Subject: Congressional Relations

**Program Area:** Legislative Affairs and Correspondence (WO-620)

The objectives of Part 461, Legislative Coordination, of the Departmental Manual are to effect the maximum interchange of information as well as expeditious and coordinated action on legislative matters, to ensure that information and action on such matters conform to the official views of the Department, and preclude misinterpretation or misunderstanding of these views. All officers and employees dealing in legislative matters are expected to contribute toward the attainment of these objectives. (See Attachment 1.)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Field Staff and WO Program Staff with the procedures designed to ensure the effective processing and handling of congressional inquiries and communications. They are intended to ensure that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) speaks with one voice on policy and legislative matters, while allowing for the necessary and invaluable communications that occur in the field between local congressional staff and the BLM. This is to remind you there is longstanding guidance in the Departmental Manual, OMB Circular A-19, and OMB Circular A-11 relating to appropriate review and clearance of written material provided to Congress on legislative or budget matters. The procedures address the most frequent instances in which we work with Congress. They should be shared widely with staff, especially with anyone who is likely to interact with congressional offices.

**Policy/Action:**

1. Providing Factual Information. The BLM routinely responds to many types of information requests from Congress. For local congressional staff, routine inquiries should be handled directly in the field, e.g., responses to routine requests for surveys, notes, brochures, or requests for factual information. Any inquiries from congressional staff in Washington, D.C., should involve BLM's WO-620 legislative staff. If there is even an outside possibility the information is being requested for a future hearing to develop legislation, WO-620 should always be notified. If you begin working on such a request, copies of information you intend to provide should be given to WO-620 before sending them to the requesting congressional office. If there are questions as to whether a request should be handled directly or referred to WO-620, please contact the appropriate staff in WO-620. (See Attachment 2.) The Department also has provided guidance on information provided to Congress. (See Attachment 1.)

2. FOIA Requests from Members of Congress.

a. Upon receipt of a request for records from a Member of Congress, the bureau should first determine whether the request is made under the authority of a congressional committee or subcommittee on a subject within its jurisdiction (usually the letter will be signed by the chairman of the committee or subcommittee). The bureau must consult with the Departmental and bureau Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCL) to ensure proper coordination and conformity of responses. Requests from individual Members of Congress may require different types of responses. The bureau must consult with OCL to determine the appropriate response.

b. Before denying a request from a Member of Congress, the responsible official will consult with OCL and the bureau's designated FOIA attorney. (See DOI 383 DM 15, United States Department of Interior, Freedom of Information Act Handbook.)

3. Preparing Legislation. In many instances, either Members of Congress or the Administration propose legislation, which affects the BLM. When BLM's participation in such efforts is requested, the legislation is coordinated through WO Legislative Affairs. Also, WO Legislative Affairs drafts legislation as required, but only with Department of the Interior and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance. The WO Legislative Affairs staff's participation in legislation is sometimes initiated via contact between congressional staff and the field or WO program staff. If so, WO Legislative Affairs needs to be notified as soon as this type of discussion begins.

a. Drafting Services. Any bureau or office receiving a request for information, drafting, or other assistance regarding the consideration or preparation of legislation, other than appropriations legislation, from sources outside of the Department will promptly notify the Legislative Counsel. The Legislative Counsel will work with the appropriate bureau or office to respond to the request and/or prepare draft legislation. After review by the Legislative Counsel, the draft will be forwarded to the requesting source by a letter generally explaining the bill and disclaiming any Departmental position. Informal copies of the draft bill and congressional letter will be forwarded to OMB. (See Attachment 1.)

b. Commenting on Legislation. Congressional staff members often ask the BLM for formal and informal comments on a legislative proposal. Sometimes those requests will be sent to field offices or State Offices. The BLM's responses to these requests must go through the Department for approval. The WO Legislative Affairs staff is responsible for coordinating the appropriate review by the Department. The Department will review the BLM's comments for consistency with Administration policy. Misrepresenting Departmental and Administration policy can be both embarrassing to the BLM and detrimental to our legislative aims.

c. Mapping Services. Congressional staff frequently ask the BLM to prepare maps for, or in anticipation of, legislation. All such requests must be coordinated through WO Legislative Affairs at their inception. Maps must also conform to certain conventions. All maps prepared for Congressional offices must include the following statement: "This map prepared at the request of [insert Congressman or Senator's name or Committee name]."

4. Hearings and Testimony. Requests to testify, either in Washington or in the field, must be coordinated with the Department through WO Legislative Affairs. The Department has established procedures with respect to hearings with which BLM must comply. For example, the Department will only testify on legislation that has been introduced, not on draft legislative proposals, and it will not testify with less than one week's notice of a hearing. Therefore, any notification (formal or informal) of a proposed hearing must be shared immediately with WO Legislative Affairs so that BLM and the Department can have the maximum amount of time possible to decide if we will testify, who will testify, and how testimony will be prepared.

5. Meetings with Members and Staff. All congressional meetings in Washington must be coordinated with WO Legislative Affairs. Additionally, WO Legislative Affairs staff provides assistance in arranging such meetings, including those requested by Members of Congress and staff and those initiated by the BLM. Advance notification of field meetings with Members or their staff should be made to WO620.

6. Correspondence. Correspondence from Members of Congress or other elected officials that is either addressed to field officials or assigned to the field for response (e.g., letters to the Director or departmental officials) will often concern routine public information matters. Such inquiries may be answered directly, without need for WO review. However, when the subject matter involves stating or clarifying BLM or Administration policy (especially when a recent policy change has occurred), the responding office must coordinate the response with the appropriate WO directorate (WO-600 or elsewhere). This may result in informal or formal WO review of draft correspondence, as appropriate. In rare instances the WO may direct that all correspondence related to a particular issue be reviewed in the WO prior to its transmittal. In addition, the field needs to consult with the WO in cases where it believes that the response should originate in the WO or in another office in the Department.

7. Lobbying Activities. The Department provides guidance concerning what may and may not be done regarding the use of Interior appropriated funds for lobbying activities. This guidance is on the Department's ethics web site ([www.doi.gov/ethics](http://www.doi.gov/ethics) - see guidelines on prohibited lobbying activities) and should be reviewed by all BLM employees. Questions about whether planned communications to the public would be affected by these lobbying restrictions should be referred to the Solicitor's Office in Washington or the Regional or Field Solicitor.

**Timeframe:** The policies outlined in this IM shall be effective immediately.

**Impact on Budget:** None

**Background:** This is a routine update of the policies and procedures that regulate the processing of congressional inquiries and communications.

**Manual/Handbook Affected:** None

**Coordination:** WO-620, WO-600, WO-100

**Contact:** If you have any questions regarding the above procedures or other legislative issues, please contact Nancy Smith, Legislative Affairs and Correspondence Division Chief, on (202) 452-5010 or Dan DuBray, Assistant Director, Communications, on (202) 208-6913.

Signed by:  
Lawrence E. Benna  
Acting, Director

Authenticated by:  
Robert M. Williams  
Division of IRM Governance, WO-560

2 Attachments

[1- Memo re: Information Provided to Congress \(2 pp\)](#)

[2- Contacts for Legislative Affairs \(1 p\)](#)